

SOARING INJURY RATES IN OUR PARKS

Beginning in 1996, a sharp upward trend can be seen in hospital emergency room visits by passengers on "fixed" rides – the category of rides exempt from CPSC regulation under the Roller Coaster Loophole. These injuries soared 96 percent over the next five years. Meanwhile, such emergency room visits were falling for passengers on rides that the CPSC still regulates.

Here are the year-by-year estimates of non-occupational amusement ride injuries, 1996-2001, from the CPSC*:

YEAR	FIXED ("Unregulated")	MOBILE ("Regulated")
1996	3419	2963
1997	5353	2562
1998	6523	2751
1999	7629	2788
2000	6595	3985
2001	6704	1609

The theme park industry likes to tell the public that its rides are safer than the mobile rides because they are overseen by a permanent park staff, but according to this independent government safety agency report, the mobile parks have less of an injury problem than the theme parks.

* U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Amusement Ride-Related Injuries and Deaths in the United States: 2002 Update, Table 2, August 2002, and Amusement Ride-Related Injuries and Deaths in the United States: 1987-2000, Table 1, August 2001.